

Commuter Gear Basics

1) Picking a bike

- You can commute on any bike as long as it is good working order
- Road bikes, mountain bikes, hybrids, cross bikes, touring bikes all work great
- The bike should reflect your riding style; relax on a 3 speed or hammer a road bike

2) Carrying capacity

- A rear rack and panniers, a basket on the front or a backpack all work well
- Panniers are most expensive and are usually waterproof; use them if you have them
- Baskets don't carry much and backpacks can make you sweat through your clothing

3) Fenders

- Full fenders are recommended; use quick release or standard bolt-on style
- The roadways can be wet from other things besides rain
- Fenders also keep dirt and mud off of your clothes

4) Lights

- Headlights are mandatory at night; white in front with a rear reflector in back
- A red light on the rear of the bike increases visibility at night
- Check batteries and replace them as soon as the light begins to dim

5) Safety

- Always wear a helmet while riding your bike no matter what
- A helmet is your last line of defense against injury in an accident
- Prevent injury by knowing the rules of the road and acting predictably

6) Tools

- Bring only tools that you know how to use; a pump is a necessity
- Prepare for breakdowns with regular inspections of your bike
- Carry a multi-tool with Allen wrenches, screwdriver, chain tool; know how to use them

7) Spare parts

- Carry a spare tube and patch kit at all times; keep another spare at work
- Know the condition of your bike and its parts by inspecting it regularly
- Keep a few spare parts that need regular replacement at work

8) Lock

- Use a high-security U-lock; don't wait until your bike is stolen to invest in a good lock
- Lock your bike to an immovable object in a highly visible area
- Secure both wheels and other components if they can be easily removed

9) Flat prevention

- Tire liners and flat resistant tires go a long way to help decrease flat tire occurrence
- Replace tires when they are worn out; check pressure with a gauge
- Familiarize yourself with how much air your tires lose each week

10) Reflection

- Make sure that motorists, cyclists and pedestrians can see you at night
- Wear bright or reflective clothing; apply reflective tape to helmet and bike
- Ankle straps keep pant legs out of the chain and usually have a reflective strip